

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIPOL 00197 100925Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4072
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
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USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 0939
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, LY, SY
SUBJ: LARG EXPRESSES DISMAY AT SYRIAN MEDIA ATTACKS

REF: TRIPOLI 0177 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: LOCAL MEDIA EXPRESSES LARG "ASTONISHMENT"
AT SYRIAN MEDIA CRITICISM OF DEPORTATION OF SYRIAN
LABORERS. LARG THREATENS REVIEW OF ARAB LABOR
RECRUITMENT POLICY AND FUTURE MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TO SYRIA. LARG INDIGNATION PROMPTS PUBLIC REVELATION
OF ALLEGED LIBYAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE DURING OCT. WAR.
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PAGE 02 TRIPOL 00197 100925Z

COMMENT: WHILE LARG MAY REVIEW ARAB LABOR RECRUITMENT
POLICY, WE DOUBT ITS ABILITY TO FIND ALTERNATIVE
MANPOWER SOURCE. PUBLIC REFERENCE TO LARG MILITARY
ASSISTANCE DURING OCT. '73 WAR SUGGESTS LARG'S ROLE
IN ANY FUTURE ARAB-ISRAEL HOSTILITIES AND REASON
LARG'S STOCKPILING OF MILITARY HARDWARE. AT MOMENT

XENOPHOBIC LARG PERCEIVES EGYPTIAN, SUDANESE, AND
NOW SYRIAN ATTEMPTING TO ISOLATE IT FROM ARAB WORLD.
END COMMENT.

1. LOCAL MEDIA OF FEB 8 AND 9 PROMINELY REFLECTED
LARG'S "ASTONISHMENT AND SURPRISE" AT THE "UNWARRANTED,
UNJUSTIFIABLE AND TOTALLY UNEXPECTED" SYRIAN MEDIA
CRITICISM OF LIBYA'S DEPORTATION OF SEVERAL SYRIAN
WORKERS. PRESS HEADLINES OF FEB 9 EQUATE SYRIAN
ATTACKS AGAINST LIBYA WITH THOSE OF EGYPTIAN REGIME.
LIBYA'S EXPRESSED DISMAY FURTHER HEIGHTENED ACCORDING
TO MEDIA, BECAUSE LARG HAS "NEVER PROVOKED SYRIA EVEN
WHEN SYRIAN TROOPS WERE USED TO STRIKE MUSLIMS AND
PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON."

2. COMMENTARIES STRESS THAT SURPLUS ARAB LABOR
RECRUITED BY LIBYANS IS DESIGNED TO ASSIST UNEMPLOY-
MENT PROBLEMS IN ARAB COUNTRIES (SIC), AND THAT AS
A RESULT OF SYRIAN CRITICISM LARG WILL BE "OBLIGED
TO RADICALLY RECONSIDER QUESTION OF RECRUITING ARAB
LABOR, IF LAYING OFF OF SOME NUMBERS OF ARAB WORKERS
FROM TIME TO TIME ACCORDING TO WORK NEEDS AND
CIRCUMSTANCES, STIRS UP PROBLEMS EVERY TIME IT IS DONE."

3. MEDIA ALSO ALLEGES THAT SYRIAN DEPORTEES WERE
ENGAGED IN ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES AND THEREFORE LARG
ACTION "AS A HOST STATE TO DEPORT A CULPRIT OF OFFEN-
DER FROM ITS TERRITORY TO HIS COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
WOULD BE SIMPLIST ACTION IN HAND, AND THE LEAST IT
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PAGE 03 TRIPOL 00197 100925Z

SHOULD DO AGAINST CULPRITS OR OFFENDERS WHEN THEY
SHOULD HAVE BEEN ARRESTED, TRIED AND PENALIZED."

4. EXTENT OF LARG INDIGNATION AT SYRIAN MEDIA
CRITICISM IS EMPHASIZED BY PUBLIC REFERENCE TO
LIBYAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SYRIA. MEDIA CLAIMS
LARG "SUPPLIED HUNDREDS OF TANKS, TENS OF AIRCRAFT,
TENS OF MILLIONS OF DINARS, AS WELL AS SUPPLIES OF
WHEAT AND REFINED FUEL WHICH WERE SHIPPED UNINTERRUPTEDLY
FROM LAR SEAPORTS TO SYRIAN HARBORS DURING THE
OCTOBER 1973 BATTLE AND AFTER IT." COMMENTARIES END
QUOTING AN ARABIC SAYING TO THE EFFECT THAT LAR
"WILL NEVER BE STUNG TWICE FROM A SNAKE HOLE."

COMMENT: LARG THREATS TO REVIEW ITS ARAB LABOR
RECRUITMENT POLICY AND FUTURE MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TO SYRIA APPEAR AIMED AT PRESSURING SYRIAN
AUTHORITIES TO MUZZLE ITS MEDIA. CRITICAL LIBYAN
MANPOWER SHORTAGE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY FORCE IT TO CONTINUE

RECRUITMENT OF FOREIGN ARAB LABOR. PRESENT LIBYAN
REACTION TO CURRENT INCIDENT IS OBVIOUS ESCALATION
OF INITIAL REACTION OF RELATIVE MODERATION. (REFTEL)

TONE OF MEDIA COMMENTARIES FEB 9 REFLECTS WHAT
APPEARS TO BE LARG'S GENUINE INCREDULITY THAT SYRIAN
AUTHORITIES WOULD ALLOW MEDIA CAMPAIGN OF ALLEGED
MAGNITUDE. SYRIAN CRITICISM TOUCHED SENSITIVE NERVE
OF LIBYA'S SELF-IMAGE VIS-A-VIS LOCAL TREATMENT OF
ARAB LABORERS, AND PROVOKED STATEMENT CONCERNING
LIBYA'S ASSISTANCE TO SYRIA DURING OCT '73 WAR.
XENOPHOBIC LARG PERCEIVES CONCERTED EGYPTIAN, SUDANESE
AND NOW SYRIAN CAMPAIGN AGAINST IT, AS FURTHER ATTEMPT
OF "REACTIONARY ARAB REGIMES" TO ISOLATE LIBYA.
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